

Message Text

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47

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ADP-00 EB-11 SCI-06 COME-00 INT-08

AEC-11 AID-20 CIAE-00 INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00

OMB-01 RSR-01 /123 W

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R 141240 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5080

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EMIN, BTRA, NG, FR, US, (KOCH, LUDWIG W)

SUBJECT: CONOCO INTEREST IN NIGER URANIUM

REF: STATE 030961

1. IN CONVERSATION MARCH 13, PRESIDENT DIORI REFERRED TO BRIEF MARCH 9 VISIT TO NIAMEY OF KOCH OF CONOCO AND ASSOCIATES TO DISCUSS LATTER' S EVENTUAL PARTICIPATION, TOGETHER WITH GON AND FRENCH CEA, IN EXPLOITATION OF IMAROUREN URANIUM CONCESSION. HE STATED CONOCO AND CEA HAD PROPOSED 20 BON, 40 CONOCO AND 40 PERCENT CEA DIVISION IN THIS UNDERTAKING. DIORI SAID HE HAD DECIDED COUNTER WITH PROPOSAL OF 34/33/33 PERCENT SPLIT AMONG NIGER, CONOCO, AND CEA.

2. PRESIDENT DIROI EXPRESSED HOPE TO ME (AS HE MAY ALSO HAVE DONE TO CONOCO) THAT US SOURCES WOULD PROVIDE FINANCING FOR GON' S SHARE IN FORM OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LOANS, LATTER TO BE REPAID FROM NIGER' S PORTION OF EARNINGS WHEN CONCESSION BEGAN PRODUCTION IN LATE 1970 S AND WORLD URANIUM MARKET HOPEFULLY GREATLY IMPROVED. HE DESCRIBED THIS AS SIMILAR TO ARRANGEMENT NIGER HAD MADE WITH FRANCE IN RESPECT TO ITS PARTICIPATION IN SOMAIR (WHERE MONEY CAME, I BELIEVE, FROM CAISSE CENTRALE LOAN) AND WITH GERMAN UNRAGESSELLSCHAFT FOR DJADO CONCESSION IN EXTREME

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NORTHEAST NIGER WHERE PROPOSED SPLIT IS GON 35, GERMANS 35 AND CEA 30 PERCENT. PRESIDENT CLEARLY HAD US/ AID IN MIND AS SOURCE OF TA, BUT DID NOT MAKE CLEAR WHETHER HE THOUGHT OF LOAN INCREMENT AS COMING FROM AID OR FROM OTHER SOURCES IN US. I OBVIOUSLY REMAINED NON- COMMITTAL REGARDING POSSIBLE AMERICAN FINANCING, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT' S VIEWS ON THIS. DIROI ADDED THAT IMAROUREN EXPLORATION HAD ALSO REVEALED VERY INTERESTING SIGNS OF MOLYBDENUM.

3. KOCH STOPPED BY EMBASSY ONLY VERY BRIEFLY LATE AFTERNOON MARCH 9 AND SAW EMBASSY COMMERCIAL OFFICER WHOM HE TOLD HE HAD SEEN GON MINISTER AND DIRECTOR OF MINES, AND DIRECTOR OF BUDGET. KOCH REFERRED TO CONOCO' S 40/40/20 PROPOSAL TO GON, BUT SAID NOTHING ABOUT (OR WAS UNAWARE OF) BON 34/33/33 COUNTER- PROPOSAL. SINCE KOCH WILL DOUBTLESS CALL ON DEPARTMENT AGAIN, WE WOULD APPRECIATE FILL- IN.

4. MEETING AMONG GON, CEA AND CONOCO REPRESENTATIVES TO FURTHER DISCUSS IMAROUREN PROPOSAL IS REPORTEDLY PLANNED IN PARIS AT END OF MARCH. CONOCO' S APPARENT HOPES CONCLUDE DEFINITIVE ARRANGEMENT DURING RECENT NIAMEY VISIT WAS NOT REALIZED.
MCCLELLAND

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